

BEING A TEEN WITH DIABETES

Taking care of your diabetes can be pretty tiring at any age. There is a lot to do. It can be especially hard when you have so many other things going on in your life.

Your teenage years are a time for physical changes. Your body starts to make new hormones as it matures. These hormones may make you feel stressed or moody. When your blood sugar goes up or down, you may have a change in your moods.

Girls will find that their blood sugar levels will change just before or during their menstrual period. This is because of hormone changes.

The next time your mood changes or you feel really stressed, stop and check your blood sugar. You may find it's out of range. Keep track of your blood sugar and your mood. Know when your mood changes because of your diabetes.

A NEW ADVENTURE

You will have many new experiences during your teenage years. These experiences mean choices. Many are very serious choices. Before making any decisions, understand all the consequences. Think about how your choices could affect your health and diabetes control. Remember, you don't have to make these decisions on your own. Ask a trusted adult for advice.

Think about these situations:

- ▶ How do I check my blood sugar on a date?
- ▶ When and how do I tell my date that I have diabetes?
- ▶ How do I pick sugar-free drinks when everyone is drinking the "real" stuff?
- ▶ How do I say no when I need to, like to extra snacks or desserts?

When facing a big decision, put STAR to work for you!

How Could STAR Help These Teens?

Tony has not been following his meal plan lately. He also quit checking his blood sugar levels regularly because they seemed high. He has a clinic visit next week. He does not want his care team to see his high blood sugar readings. What should Tony do?

STOP: What is the problem?

The problem is that Tony is discouraged because his blood sugars have been high lately. His blood sugars

have been high because he hasn't been following his meal plan. It's hard to follow a healthy meal plan and check blood sugars every day.

THINK: What are the choices? What are the good points? What are the bad points?

Tony has a lot of options. He could skip his clinic visit. That would mean his blood sugars would continue to be high and make him feel bad. He could go to the visit and make up blood sugars. Once the A1C test results come back, his care team will know how he's really been doing. He can be honest. He can tell his care team that his meal plan has been hard to follow and that he needs help.

ACT: What would you do?

Tony decides to go to the clinic appointment. He chooses to discuss his high blood sugars and challenges with his diabetes management. He also wants to ask his family for help. Tony and his diabetes care team try a different meal plan that might work better for him.

REFLECT: What do you think will happen? Would you do it that way again?

Tony realizes that it was good to talk about the problems he was having. He learned that he was not alone. He learned how to work with his care team to manage his diabetes.

BEING A TEEN WITH DIABETES

Mikah is 14. She is at her friend Dara’s house with some other friends. Dara’s parents are not home. Dara finds some vodka and starts passing it around. The others join in. The bottle comes to Mikah. What should Mikah do?

STOP: What is the problem?

THINK: What are the choices? What are the good points? What are the bad points?

ACT: What would you do?

REFLECT: What do you think will happen? Would you do it that way again?

To help with this exercise, see page 26 about Alcohol and Diabetes.

Here are some tips for using STAR for these tough choices:

- ▶ Know your goals.
- ▶ Know your values and your family’s values.
- ▶ Trust your goals and values.
- ▶ Gather as many facts as you can.
- ▶ Take your time to decide.
- ▶ Ask friends and family you trust for help.
- ▶ Make the choice for YOU, not for others.

Try this exercise with your care team or your family.

STOP: _____

THINK: _____

ACT: _____

REFLECT: _____

TOBACCO, DRUGS, AND DIABETES

Tobacco and drugs are not good for anyone. If you have diabetes, cigarettes and drugs can affect your body in more negative ways.

Here are the facts:

FACT. Using tobacco if you are underage is illegal.

FACT. Using drugs is illegal at any age.

FACT. Tobacco, whether in cigarettes or chewing tobacco, is linked to cancer and other diseases.

FACT. Tobacco and diabetes make a deadly pair. Tobacco narrows blood vessels. Diabetes also narrows blood vessels. Together, they slow blood to the brain, the heart, and other body parts.

FACT. It’s really hard to quit smoking. It’s much easier never to start.

FACT. Drugs take you away from your goals.

FACT. Drugs mess up your blood sugar and your health.

FACT. Drugs can lead to problems with the law.

Now that you know the facts, the best thing you can do for your diabetes and your health is to avoid smoking and using drugs.

It can be hard to say no when asked to smoke or use drugs. Think about the reasons why you should say no to cigarettes and drugs.

Are you already smoking or using drugs and would like to quit? Talk to your diabetes care team. They can help.

ALCOHOL AND DIABETES

If you are younger than 21 years old, it's illegal for you to drink alcohol.

Here are some more facts:

FACT. Alcohol affects your diabetes care. It can interfere with your diabetes medicines. It can keep your blood sugars out of your target range. Alcohol can lead to very high or very low blood sugars.

FACT. Alcohol is full of calories. If you're trying to lose weight, steer clear of alcohol.

FACT. Driving after drinking alcohol can be deadly. NEVER get behind a wheel if you have been drinking alcohol. You can put your life and the lives of others at risk.

Think about the reasons why you should say no when offered an alcoholic drink. Then think about ways you can say no when you are offered an alcoholic drink. For example, try, "No thanks, I'm the designated driver."

Are you already drinking alcohol and would you like to quit? Talk with your diabetes care team. They can help with this challenge too.

If you are old enough and choose to drink alcohol, please do it safely:

- ▶ Wear a medical ID.
- ▶ Tell your friends about your diabetes. If you act drunk, you might really have low blood sugar.
- ▶ Do not skip meals or drink on an empty stomach.
- ▶ Do not skip your medicines.
- ▶ Limit your drinks to one or two.
- ▶ Mix your alcohol with diet sodas or water.
- ▶ Know your blood sugar, especially before you go to sleep for the night.
- ▶ Do not EVER drink and drive.

DATING

Whether it's your relationship with your best friend, your mom, or your brother, the most important part of any relationship is communication. This is especially true in dating.

Does the person you want to date already know about your diabetes? When do you tell? Who you tell and when you tell them are your decisions.

When you're ready, here are some examples of how to do it:

Eric decided to tell Juana about his diabetes before he asked her out. After all, he was not embarrassed about it. He stayed positive about it. He told her, "Hey, I have diabetes. It's not a big deal. I just have to take some meds, watch what I eat, and exercise. Want to go to the movies Friday night?"

Sometimes teens worry that their friends will become the "food patrol" if they know about the diabetes:

Ricardo was getting frustrated with his friends. They were always telling him what he could or couldn't eat. He knew his friends were trying to help. He didn't want to hurt their feelings. He decided that not telling them he was frustrated would hurt their friendship more. One afternoon he said, "Guys, I really appreciate your help, but my mom is already reminding me of what I can and can't eat. I know you care, but I am in charge of my diabetes and I'll take care of it. Can you guys just be my friends?"

SEX: ARE YOU READY?

Choosing when to have sex is a very personal decision. It is one of the most important decisions you will make. If you have questions, talk to all the important people in your life. Your parents, religious leaders, doctors and nurses, coaches, teachers, and your friends' parents can help you with this choice.

Be in control of your choice! Use all of the STAR tips you have practiced to help you with your decision.

SAFE SEX

If you're sure you're ready, then be sure you are protected:

- ▶ Unprotected sex can lead to sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.
- ▶ Unprotected sex can lead to pregnancy.
- ▶ It is best to protect yourself.

Talk with your doctor and parents about birth control options and disease prevention.

PREGNANCY AND DIABETES

Pregnancy for a woman with diabetes is serious. High blood sugars can harm an unborn child. Having a healthy baby takes good planning. For more information, talk to your educator or doctor.

Some diabetes medicines you take could harm an unborn child. Let your health care team know immediately if you think you are pregnant.

